

PugetSoundPartnership

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Puget Sound Partnership Update

January 2010

Action Area Reports

San Juan/Whatcom Action Area

San Juan

- The San Juan County Council unanimously approved the final recommendations from the Local Integrating Organization steering committee and agreed to draft a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Puget Sound Partnership initiating the San Juan LIO.
- Additional Partnership staff efforts are currently underway on the following:
 - Facilitating coordination with sister state agency staff on strategic approach and messaging.
 - Conducting outreach with property rights advocates identifying possible solutions to adversarial issues.
 - Co-facilitating the adaptive management process for the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 2 salmon recovery plan.

Whatcom

- Initiated discussions with the salmon team on the 3-year work plan process.
- Enhancing ECONet coordination within the community and facilitating grant coordination.
- Continuing conversations with the Joint Policy board (Water Resources and Salmon Recovery) staff and members, and sister state agency staff, about adoption of a Local Integration Organization.

Action Agenda Implementation with State Agencies

- To ensure all new projects are in alignment with the Action Agenda, Partnership staff presented guidance to RCO grant management staff and discussed best methods for future alignment opportunities.
- As a result of this meeting Partnership staff are developing a presentation and guidance for project reviewers and evaluators.

Whidbey Basin (Skagit, Stillaguamish, Island, and Snohomish watersheds)

Puget Sound Partnership staff is advancing local integration discussions across the Whidbey Basin, first focusing on scale. Staff is working towards a meeting of representatives across the Basin in March/April to make a decision on the scale. In addition to this work, the following is an update on the specific areas:

- *Skagit Watershed:* Skagit watershed is advancing their monitoring and adaptive management efforts as well as developing their three-year work plan and preparing for an upcoming Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) and Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) round. The Samish Clean Water Initiative, a 21-member group of entities focused on cleaning up Samish River and Bay is underway. Staff supported Skagit County in developing an EPA grant application to develop a 'Pollution Identification and Control' program for the Samish watershed as well as a grant application to complete the Skagit Alternative Futures project. Staff also worked with the Swinomish Tribe on a grant application to support their participation in Partnership efforts and to advance salmon recovery implementation.
- *Stillaguamish Watershed:* Stillaguamish watershed is preparing for the upcoming PSAR and SRFB round. Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (in Stillaguamish and Island watersheds) held a science workshop to further identify targets and their plan. Staff supported grant development through the EPA proposal. One grant was for water quality in Port Susan and the second was to better understand hydrology issues in the watershed.
- *Island Watershed:* Island watershed is preparing for an upcoming PSAR and SRFB round. Staff supported grant development to fund implementation of Action Agenda priorities, including advancing Low Impact Development and water quality work.
- *Snohomish Watershed:* Snohomish watershed is preparing for an upcoming PSAR and SRFB round. Snohomish is advancing their monitoring and adaptive management work, coordinating with the Partnership. Staff supported grant development for two grants: 1) focus on watershed characterization; and 2) coordinate efforts for land use planning and habitat restoration.

South Central Action Area (Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish, Green/Duwamish, and Puyallup/White watersheds)

- The South Central Action Area Caucus Group, serving as the local integrating group, is holding bimonthly meetings and continues to focus on advancing a process to identify local priorities for Action Agenda implementation by

sequencing priority actions in the Action Agenda. This effort will identify local priorities to help direct new and existing resources, inform and coordinate local legislative agendas, and improve local coordination and integration of efforts to recover Puget Sound.

- Salmon recovery watershed groups are beginning their annual update to their three-year work plans, which document progress towards meeting local watershed recovery goals, including accomplishments from the prior year, shifts in implementation strategy, and anticipated future challenges. The update process incorporates newly identified or developed restoration and protection projects, and involves a local technical and citizen project review and ranking to identify priorities for funding in the coming year. Watersheds' are also working to identify ready-to-go priority projects as part of developing a Sound-wide project list to demonstrate the need for additional restoration and protection funds and support the 2011-2013 biennial Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration funding request.

South Sound Action Area

The South Sound Action Area has been moving forward with local integration efforts. Individuals and entities in South Sound have collaborated to develop options for a South Sound organization.

- The Core Group Subcommittee, with staff from South Sound counties, tribes, and state agencies, met on January 14 to develop options for South Sound elected officials to consider. Options for the purpose, focus, and framework of the organization will be discussed at an upcoming meeting of elected officials.
- Elected officials from four counties and three tribal councils and their staff have accepted invitations to meet. The previously scheduled February 4th elected officials meeting is being rescheduled due to unexpected circumstances.
- The Core Group met on January 15 to discuss the on-going efforts for local integration, updates on grant proposals and awards, and updates on designating partners.
- The South Sound Salmon Recovery Group (SSSRG) will reconvene to review progress, discuss the three-year work plan schedule, adaptive management planning, and other issues. The SSSRG meeting will meet within the next couple of weeks.

North-Central Action Area Update

- The West Sound Watersheds Council continues to move forward with establishing their organizational structure and working through their scope of work. Currently, Partnership staff is helping reach out to various members of the county in order to get local elected officials and representatives from the cities

to participate in West Sound Watersheds decision-making. This is important, as this group is not solely focused on salmon recovery but wishes to take a broader view towards ecosystem-recovery in general. This is inherent in their approach to salmon recovery since much of the salmon habitat in their region is located in the nearshore.

- Partnership staff is also trying to connect Ecology's Shoreline Master Program update process with local jurisdictions to facilitate information sharing and fine tune ways to connect salmon and ecosystem protection with the process.

Hood Canal Watershed

Partnership personnel staffing the Hood Canal have been in transition and recently changed hands, thus new staff is coming up to speed on the local players and processes happening in this Action Area. Staff continues to support the following efforts: aligning the Hood Canal Coordinating Council's Integrated Watershed Plan with the Partnership's Open Standards process and Action Agenda; working with the HCCC to connect them to the Local Integration process; reaching out to communities to facilitate their participation in implementing the Action Agenda; implementing capital and capacity based salmon recovery actions. Staff also worked closely with the Lead Entity and the HCCC to connect their recent EPA grant proposal to the Action Agenda by offering review and consultation.

Other work by Partnership staff in the Hood Canal area includes:

- Meeting with scientists at the UW involved in the monitoring and modeling of Hood Canal over the past five years. Their work is winding down and funding runs out this month. Lead scientists are submitting papers to scientific journals, and hopefully will be completed by June 2010. Scott Brewer, Director of the HCCC, and PSP staff explained the process for using scientific information to help formulate topical issue papers that will inform elected officials and serve as advice on corrective actions for the canal's dissolved oxygen situation. Scientists will be identified to assist with the technical subcommittees.
- Partnership staff led an interagency local and state agency and EPA meeting on wastewater treatment and reclamation in lower Hood Canal. Funding and design efforts are focused on the Potlatch facility in lower Hood Canal. There's a critical shortfall in funding of ~\$2 M in non-federal money to complete construction by mid-2011. Some of the state and federal matching funds will disappear or be re-appropriated if construction doesn't start this year.

Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area Progress Report

The next set of meetings for the Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network (Strait ERN) is scheduled for February 26, 2010. Agenda highlights include:

- Local Integration Proposal – Discussion and, hopefully, approval of a final draft proposal for submission to Leadership Council at their March 2010 meeting.
- EPA Request For Proposal Processes – Strait AA 2009 project proponent feedback and 2010 RFP preparations; overview to Jefferson Work Group of Hood Canal Coordinating Council proposal.
- Strait ECO Net – Updates on local *Puget Sound Starts Here* campaign and North Olympic “Peninsula Voices” video project.
- Shoreline Master Program Updates – Updates on efforts in Clallam County, Port Angeles, and Sequim and policy feedback from Clallam Work Group membership.
- Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response – Preparations for upcoming Northwest Area Committee meeting in March.
- Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan - presentation on draft by Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Progress on actions within the Action Area include:

- EPA RFP 2009 Proposal Submissions – Six proposals were submitted for the two EPA RFP offerings that closed this month; four for the Watershed Management Assistance RFP and two for the Tribal Assistance RFP; Partnership staff actively commented on all proposals.
- Salmon Recovery Actions – National Estuary Program contract nearly complete; Partnership staff continued to assist in proactive efforts to update 3-year work plan for 2010; Work is on schedule.

Aquatic Habitat Guidelines Steering Committee – Facilitated development of a matrix of information on needed guidelines as part of 3-year work plan, and seeking funding to complete or develop high priority guidelines.

Stormwater and Low Impact Development

The Stormwater Work Group, charged with developing the first element of an ecosystem monitoring system, released a draft strategy for monitoring stormwater in December. They are now finishing this draft, and starting to write the implementation strategy. All work by the group is due by June 30, 2010. Partnership staff is key participants in the group.

Developing and implementing low impact development (LID) incentives: Three of the biggest incentives are quality, inexpensive training; technical guidance; and flow control credits. The Partnership is working with and funding WSU Extension to provide low-cost

state of the art LID training workshops this February through April, and next year. The Partnership also developed an agreement with and is funding WSU Extension to revise the LID Technical Guidance Manual for Puget Sound beginning this spring, update flow control credits for using LID techniques, and offer the new manual for free.

Science and Technical

The 2010 Science Update continues. *The Puget Sound Science Update* will be the state-of-the-science document supporting the work of the Puget Sound Partnership to restore and protect the Puget Sound ecosystem. The Partnership statute calls for the Update to be completed by April 2010. The work is on schedule to be completed on time. A Web page and FAQ have been developed to help explain the importance of the update, process, and schedule.

The Partnership is staffing up its science program: Nathalie Hamel was appointed the monitoring program manager effective February 1. Science Program Director interviews were held in January and discussions will continue into February.

Invasive Species

Last year, EPA provided \$221,000 to RCO on behalf of the legislatively created Washington Invasive Species Council to:

- Determine both the extent and impact of invasive species in Puget Sound and identify any gaps in protection and develop a baseline database of invasive species in Puget Sound.
- Develop a web-based information clearinghouse to share and report invasive species information.
- Conduct limited outreach and education on the baseline and clearinghouse.

As of January 2010, the Washington Invasive Species Council:

- Selected a subset of 15 species from a priority list of 50 for this project. The Council worked with the Puget Sound Partnership Science Panel to select the 50 top priority species.
- Compiled existing information and data (e.g. maps, reports, action plans) on 15 invasive species.
- Compiled a list of programs and plans from state, local, federal and nongovernmental sources for them.
- Produced downloadable facts sheets on each species.
- Posted information on their webpage.

The 15 priority species selected by the Council pose the greatest environmental and economic impact to the Sound. The species include: zebra/quagga mussels, Lymantriids (gypsy moth family), wood-boring beetles, kudzu, feral swine, variable leaf milfoil, Brazilian elodea, hydrilla, a nonnative viral fish disease (VHS type Iva), knapweeds, nutria, common reed, killer algae (Caulerpa), tunicates, and Spartina.

Partnership staff participated in an interagency advisory committee to investigate possible approaches to reduce or eliminate the New Zealand mud snail in Olympia's Capitol Lake. One approach that proved quite effective to kill snails in the nearshore lake area during a freeze in December was evaluated. Another option considered drawing down the lake and then flooding it with marine water from Lower Budd Inlet during extreme high tides in early February. General Administration who manages the lake dismissed this option at the present time. A major concern was the potential unintended effect on other native species (plants, fish and other animals) that currently occupy the lake.

Oyster Emergency and Ocean Acidification

An interagency group submitted 'an intent to apply' for EPA scientific funds for Phase 2 of this project. Agencies and organizations that took part in phase 1 studies will meet the first week in February to draft a more comprehensive study of this phenomenon of ocean acidification in Hood Canal and broader Puget Sound, and better understand its impact on young oysters and their ability to survive.

Performance Management/Accountability

The 2009 State of the Sound report is now available and on the web. Printed copies will be available by the end of February.

This year, the Partnership plans to complete significant portions of the performance management system, including setting ecosystem targets and threat reduction targets. Work is underway and it is anticipated that the final list of ecosystem components and threat groupings will be brought to the March 18 Leadership Council with a preview discussion and the March 5 ECB meeting. Work on the ecosystem targets and threat reduction targets will be focused in the April-September time period. In addition, the Partnership is working with state agencies to set performance measures for the near-term actions funded in the 2009-11 biennium. As much performance-related information that is available in March will be shared with the state agencies to assist with preparation of the 2011-13 budget and statutorily required cost estimates for Action Agenda implementation.

This work needs input from several cross-Partnership work groups: Performance Management, Threats to the Ecosystem, and Implementation Strategies. We are

holding joint meetings of these three groups to help guide the work and be efficient with time. Work group sessions have been scheduled.

Communications and Outreach

The Partnership is forming a coalition with other state agencies, NGO's and local governments to refine our vision and strategy for implementing a coordinated regional outreach program for Puget Sound recovery. Using ECONet as a framework, the coalition will function to align, coordinate and leverage existing efforts toward measurable progress, and identify priority programs/strategies for enhanced implementation and investment.

The coalition's first task is submitting a proposal for EPA's Puget Sound Education, Outreach and Stewardship grant which could provide up to \$6 million over the next five years. Goals for grant-funded work are to make measurable, targeted advances in three major areas: 1) significantly increase problem awareness with Puget Sound residents, 2) reduce pollution through stormwater Best Management Practices and 3) improve shoreline management – both via local Shoreline Master Programs/Critical Area Ordinances and shoreline BMPs. Elements to address these issues will be built around effective social marketing frameworks targeting measurable behavior change. We also hope to leverage significant in-kind and external funding toward these efforts. If the grant is awarded, we will form a Steering Committee to help us guide the work.

The *2009 State of the Sound* report news release received significant news media attention in several newspapers, including a front-page story in The Olympian, and on several radio and television outlets.

The communications team is putting the finishing touches on a stormwater educational animation, explaining the problems of stormwater around Puget Sound and actionable steps that can be taken to reduce it's impact. The final animation will be distributed to all ECONet Members for inclusion in their community presentation kits. In addition it will be available for viewing online at the *Puget Sound Starts Here* website.

Budget and Contracts

In January the Partnership worked with other state agencies to ascertain the impact of the Governor's budget on Puget Sound protection and restoration activities. The outcome of this was discussed at the January 28th Leadership Council meeting. Briefing materials were prepared related to the Governor's \$10 million capital budget request to the Partnership to provide grants to implement priority habitat restoration, wastewater and stormwater projects and toxic clean-ups. The agency has been providing requested information to the State Auditor who is completing a routine fiscal audit of the Partnership. This audit will cover the 2007-09 Biennium and should be completed by the end of February. The Partnership also completed fiscal notes on proposed

legislation impacting Puget Sound and facilitated necessary contracts and grants for the agency.

Cross Partnership Work Groups

In 2009, the Partnership identified the need for five small, cross-Partnership work groups. These groups are informal and advisory, and will meet as needed to focus on specific high-level guidance and directional questions. These advisory groups will: serve as a sounding board for staff, focus science efforts on key policy questions, advance science-policy discussions, and support cross-board coordination.

The current activities of the five groups are:

- *Performance Management*: This group met several times in the fall of 2009, a meeting was held in January, and more are being scheduled. The group has been assisting staff with development of the overall Open Standards framework with a specific focus on making recommendations for setting ecosystem and threat reduction targets and benchmarks.
As noted above, in 2010, some meetings of this group are combined with the Threats to the Ecosystem Group and Implementation Strategies Group to more effectively develop targets. It is anticipated that such combined meetings could also be needed later in the year and in 2011 to discuss Action Agenda adaptation needs. Such work would include incorporation of the information in the Science Update.
- *Threats to the Ecosystem*. In early 2010, this group is meeting with the performance management group to advise on threat groupings and assist with the setting of threat reduction and ecosystem targets.
- *Implementation Strategies*. In early 2010, this group is also meeting to assist with the setting of threat reduction and ecosystem targets. Expertise from this group will help with the alignment of strategies and actions to help meet those targets.
- *Communications and Social Strategies*. The last meeting was a review and discussion of the strategy to apply for the proposed EPA Puget Sound Outreach, Education, and Stewardship program grant. This group will play an integral role as further communications and outreach plans are developed.
- *Funding Strategies*. This group has not yet met.